Avon House Preparatory School

Celebrating & Supporting Every Child

Absence Policy and Procedures

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence (including persistent and severe absence)

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Mr Biston (Deputy Head) and can be contacted via 020 8504 1749 or emailed at office@ahsprep.co.uk.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school each term

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.

- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school

3.3 The Deputy Head

The Deputy Head is responsible for:

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Governing Body/ Head Teacher

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Leading attendance across the school

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Head Teacher

- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence

3.4 Class/Specialist Teachers

- Class/Specialist Teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the School Office for both the morning and afternoon sessions

- It is an expectation that if children have been absent for three days that the Class Teacher will make a phone call home as a method of 'keeping in touch'. Extended absence in this way should then be recorded in the blue class Incidents and Concerns book

3.5 School Administrative Staff

School Administrative Staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

- Transfer calls from parents to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.00am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when their child is expected to return

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and that in cases that this is not possible 24 hours' notice should be provided. Appointments should be evidenced where possible or may be recorded as unauthorised

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

- We will keep a digital attendance register (iSams) and place all pupils onto this register

- We will take our attendance register at the start of the registration session of each school day and after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

(See appendix 1 for the Avon House attendance codes).

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for the duration of time that the pupil is registered at the school

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and will be kept open until 8:50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:30pm and will be kept open until 13:40pm.

<u>4.2 Unplanned Absence</u>

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the School Administrative staff (see also section 7).

Alternatively, an email can be sent to <u>office@ahsprep.co.uk</u>.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the sickness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

<u>4.3 Planned Absence</u>

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment following the previous guidance in section 3.6. We ask for medical evidence to support appointments where we can.

Parents should request leave of absence by emailing the School Office at office@ahsprep.co.uk, calling 020 8504 1749 or visiting the reception.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

(Please see the school's guidance in connection to lateness)

4.5 Following Up on Unexplained Absence.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the absence

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider seeking further advice under safe guarding with the appropriate brough in question pertaining to the child's home address

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels termly written reports.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a situation that falls outside of those that can be expectedly managed by parents.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, by emailing the School Office before the planned absence. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Further examples could include:

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Head Teacher may grant term-time holiday.

(Flexi-schooling requests – your school can add details of its procedures for requesting and deciding on this)

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The school runs an attendance initiative; at the end of each term, children's attendance is celebrated as part of a whole school assembly. Children whose attendance is recorded as being 100% receive an attendance prize.

Attendance also forms part of the children's school reports and is a discussion point during Parent Consultations with their child's Class Teacher.

7. Attendance Monitoring

Registers are taken each morning and again after lunch, Class/Specialist Teachers record class attendance using iSAMs online register; should there be any issues with recording this data online, paper registers are taken and sent to the School Office; the School Administrative Staff will record them online at their earliest convenience. Attendance checks occur in the week before the end of each Half Term.

Should a child be absent for three days the Class Teacher will make a courtesy call home to touch base with their student.

During which reports are run from iSAMs and the data recorded within the attendance folder. In the first half of the Autumn Term no absence letters are sent out to the parents as each day in the first half term reflects 3.2% of the total attendance and there a child who is only absent for two days would fall below the expected levels.

From the end of the Autumn Term children whose attendance falls below 95% are contacted by the Deputy Head in writing to highlight the issue with attendance; should attendance continue to decrease, parents are invited in to have a meeting and an attendance plan will be created in order to help parents improve their child's time at school.

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

Avon House will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at National and Local Authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governing Body

7.2 Analysing Attendance.

Avon House will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance.

Avon House will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Class Teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence.

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Avon House will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

- Upon identifying cases of increasing absence, a letter will initially be sent from the Deputy Head highlighting how parents can work with the school to help improve their children's attendance. In cases where attendance continues to deteriorate closer monitoring and meetings will occur

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Deputy head, Head Teacher and School Administrative Staff. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

9. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes
The following codes are taken from the Avon House registration system (found on iSAMS) school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Yes	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
Yes	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
Late	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
L	Remote home learning	As experienced during Covid
K	Keyworker provision (on site)	As experienced during Covid
Q	Vulnerable provision (on site)	As experienced during Covid

Reviewed February 2023 GB
Reviewed August 2023 GB